

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 AF-08 OPIC-03

PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /087 W

-----062127Z 095927 /70/46

R 061650Z JAN 77 MCN CORRECTION

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9728

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LISBON 0140

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: WHERE THERE IS SMOKE THERE  
IS NOT ALWAYS FIRE

REF: LISBON 0051

SUMMARY: AN OPPOSITION-INSPIRED MEDIA OFFENSIVE HAS BEEN  
LAUNCHED TO GENERATE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS  
FACING IMMINENT CRISIS. THE STYLE OF THE CAMPAIGN AND ITS  
TARGETS MARK IT AS THE WORK OF RIGHT-WING MILITARY MEN AND  
DISGRUNTLED CONSERVATIVE POLITICIAN. END SUMMARY

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1. TEMPEST IN TEAPOT DEPARTMENT: THE RIGHTIST OPPOSITION  
MEDIA HAVE SEIZED UPON A SERIES OF RECENT EVENTS, SOME  
CONTRIVED, TO FOSTER THE IMPRESSION THAT A POLITICAL CRISIS IS  
IMMINENT. THE DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDE:

-- RESIGNATION OF WALTER ROSA: IT HAS BEEN PLAYED AS THE  
BEGINNING OF A MAJOR CABINET RESHUFFLE WHICH COULD BRING  
DOWN THE GOVERNMENT.

-- COSTA BRAS AFFAIR: CONSERVATIVE DAILY "O DIA" ON JAN 5 FLOATED THE STORY THAT INTERIOR MINISTER COSTA BRAS WAS THE CHOICE OF THE "MELOANTUNISTAS" TO REPLACE SOARES AS PRIME MINISTER IN A NEW GOVERNMENT INCLUDING MILITARY MEN AND INDEPENDENTS.

-- RC MEETING WITH TRADE UNIONISTS: THE JAN 5 MEETING OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBERS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED LABOR MOVEMENT HAS RAISED THE SPECTER OF A NEW PUSH BY THE MILITARY LEFT.

2. LIGHT PIDE SENTENCES EVOKE PROTESTS: POLITICIANS ON THE LEFT AND CENTER PROTESTED THE "LIGHT" 45-MONTH SENTENCE GIVEN JAN 5 TO FORMER SECRET POLICE (PIDE) AGENT ANTONIO DOMINGUES FOR THE 1961 MURDER OF COMMUNIST ACTIVIST DIAS COELHO. DEDUCTING TIME ALREADY SERVED, COMINGUES WILL SERVE ONLY TEN MORE MONTHS. THE DOMINGUES JUDGEMENT FOLLOWS THE LIBERATION OF SEVEN OTHER EX-PIDE AGENTS IN RECENT DAYS.

3. COMMENT: THE STYLE OF THE MEDIA OFFENSIVE AND ITS TARGETS MARK IT AS THE WORK OF RIGHT-WING MILITARY MEN AND CONSERVATIVE POLITICIANS. THE PRINCIPAL ASSERTIONS--THAT A MAJOR GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION OR EVEN A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT IS IMMINENT--HAVE BEEN SPECIFICALLY DENIED BY THE PRESIDENT, COSTA BRAS, AND SPOKESMEN FOR THE PRIME MINISTER. THE STORIES THEMSELVES ARE FOR THE MOST PART DEMONSTRABLE FALSE. THE SURFACING OF THE ASSERTIONS, MOST OF WHICH HAVE MADE THE ROUNDS PRIVATELY IN RECENT WEEKS, MAY REFLECT GROWING FRUSTRATIONS AMONG ELEMENTS OF THE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION.

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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